

IPSWICH SCHOOL COMMITTEE BUDGET MEETING
FEBRUARY 4, 2015
MS/HS ENSEMBLE ROOM

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Nylén called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Present were J. Bauman, H. O'Flynn, F. Krason, and S. Player. Mr. Hopping joined the meeting at 7:30 p.m. Also present were Superintendent Hart, Finance Director Cuff, Director of Pupil Personnel Services Hegedus, and all four principals.

MISSION STATEMENT READING

Mrs. Bauman read the District's Mission Statement.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Nylén read the following announcements:

No Executive Session will be held this evening.

STEAM Needs Assessment meeting for parents will be held on February 5, 5-6 p.m., M/HS Media Center

School Committee will meet on February 5, 7 p.m., M/H School Ensemble Room for Elementary and Central Office budgets and regular business

Mrs. Bauman acknowledged the work that Robert Weatherall, recently deceased, had accomplished on behalf of the children as a former School Committee member and especially in looking into the lack of funds left by Mr. Payne to the Schools. She thanked him for all his years of service to the school children and Mr. Nylén called for a moment of silence in his memory.

Dr. Hart expanded on the STEAM meeting stating that there is a team of consultants meeting with parents, students, and community members whose objective is to gather information on what the Ipswich schools are currently doing and aspire to do with a comprehensive STEAM plan which will be formulated as a result.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

Scott Jewell, MS technology teacher, spoke of his analysis of MCAS scores from 2000 on. He noticed a trend; namely, that scores in 2001-2010 were 10-12% above average for his class data, but then they dropped. Of the variables he studied, only one matched his data and that was class size. In 2000-10, he had class sizes of 21-25, but from 2011 on, his class size rose to 26-32. His conclusion: class size does matter; it shows in our results. He urged study during budget cycle to keep the class sizes small.

Dana Allen, Director of the Birth to 3 Program, cautioned that the B23 Family Center cannot go on the way it is now insufficiently funded and asked for consideration in budget decision making, even before override discussion.

Following Ms. Allen, Martha Levine, of Cape Ann Early Intervention, pleaded for the

B23 program, and two Ipswich parents spoke of the need for and excellence of the program.

I. HIGH SCHOOL AND MIDDLE SCHOOL FY16 BUDGET PRESENTATION

A. IPSWICH HIGH SCHOOL BUDGET

Mr. Nylen explained to the audience that this is the first of two nights of budget presentation with tomorrow's being the Elementary and Central Office budgets and Dr. Hart's summation of the total budget picture. He spoke of the "appropriated budget"—the one the administration and School Committee have created for the Town and will not be speaking specifically to an override budget yet.

Dr. Hart warned that upcoming presentations will be level funded. While more money is added to the budget, there is anticipated growth; however, funds have been absorbed by special education and other fixed costs and what remains is the same that we had the year before but with an increased budget figure. Level funding, therefore, means cutting because everything rises in a given year.

He commended the administration for their hours and professionalism, especially mentioning Joanne Cuff, Financial Director.

Mr. David Dalton, Principal, introduced himself and asked some questions of the audience before presenting High School budget numbers. The components of a strong high school experience, he said in a PowerPoint presentation, are a strong core curriculum, the opportunity to pursue relevant coursework, and varied entry points to engage in the high school setup. Do our students have equitable opportunities for engagement and will they be able to compete with students from surrounding communities? He presented the reductions in staff of 8 fulltime equivalent (FTE) teachers since 2008, amounting to 40 sections of curriculum or 800 seats lost. These cuts continue in 2015 and 2016, with student transfers out in the 9th grade (from Grade 8) averaging 8% in years 2010-2012 and 15% in years 2014 and 2015. Elective programming is eliminated in order to preserve reasonable class size. AP sections are impacted while honors sections get larger and the next impact is that the high school is treading water versus adding forward-thinking programs. He showed several shots of current student activities in visual art and technology. College/career ready numbers, 4-year graduation rate (2013: 96.4%) and dropout rate (2014: .2%), and National Merit (2014-15: 5 commendations) were impressive. Graphic illustrations of Level 1 schools showed Ipswich compared with Dover/Sherborn and Lynnfield (same enrollments) where per pupil expenditures range up to \$5,000 more per student. Mr. Dalton exclaimed about what Ipswich could do with the \$10 million more that Dover/Sherborn gets!

He stated that Ipswich has reached the tipping point, that magic moment when an idea, trend, or social behavior crosses a threshold, tips, and spreads like wildfire (Malcolm Gladwell). The future of reducing staff to maintain the status quo rather than enhancing programs is Ipswich's new norm—the negative side of the

tipping point. The budget has two goals: (1) Preserve core academic programs and relevant elective options and (2) maintain reasonable class sizes in core disciplines. The 2015-16 budget for the High School is \$5,905,073 with equities lost, athletic fees increased. Mr. Dalton showed budget reductions of staff, coaching salaries and stipends for extra curricular and budget increases in special education costs (over \$500,000).

The Board thanked Mr. Dalton for a great High School presentation. Mr. Nylen wondered what parents and students are looking for; Mr. Dalton showed them the offerings, spoke of dual enrollments, joining clubs, etc. and remarked to the Board that the key problem is that, with funding, he could double or triple the number of students who could be accommodated. Mr. Hopping asked about enrollment projections; forty are currently applying to transfer out from IMS elsewhere. To Mr. Hopping's question of summarizing his time at Ipswich High, Mr. Dalton reviewed his service which began in 1985: SACs, the emphasis on 21st Century classrooms with the new school, technology, MS/HS improved performance, and incredible pride. Now he feels that he is watching the fall of Camelot and sad to watch the music program about to fall.

Mr. Nylen moved, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn, to take the High School FY'16 budget under advisement. UNANIMOUS.

B. MIDDLE SCHOOL BUDGET

Mr. David Fabrizio, Middle School Principal, commented that his usual optimism can't be reflected because of the reality. His teachers do a wonderful job (9 with over 30 students in their classrooms), and he is proud to work with them and see something new and creative going on in the classroom every day. He reviewed the history from FY'13 with a fully staffed Middle School model to cuts in FY'14 of more teaching positions and World Language at Grade 8 to major cuts in FY'15 in all three grades with reduced teacher teams and related arts classes being taught by administrators. et al. His goals: (1) Reduce class size and (2) Preserve MS values (teaming for students, common planning time, smaller learning communities, and interdisciplinary collaboration). With that in mind, a core of staff used the opportunity to design another new model to allow more freedom to push the STEAM initiative and further incorporate SHOM (Successful Habits of Mind). The 6th grade will be a fully staffed MS model and the 7th/8th grade academic teachers will be teaching five classes. Students will have a full year of Spanish and social studies (Grade 8) and Intro to Spanish (Grade 7), all with an average of 24 students in a class. District-wide, the band and orchestra will begin in the 6th grade.

The Board commended Mr. Fabrizio for his presentation and Mr. Hopping asked how the teachers are doing. Mr. Fabrizio said there is tension. While they don't like change, changing the model was imperative. Because they are professional, they do what they have to do.

Dr. O'Flynn moved, seconded by Mrs. Bauman, to take the 2016 Middle School budget under advisement. UNANIMOUS.

II. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Bauman moved, seconded by Dr. O'Flynn, to adjourn at 8:54 p.m. UNANIMOUS.